

WORKERS' TRUTH

Dedicated to the
Construction of the
International Party of
Revolutionary Workers
(Fourth International)

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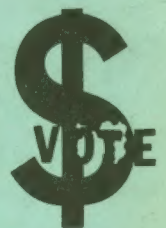
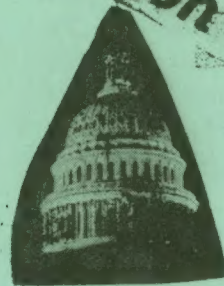
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Editorial

Forward to the International Party of Revolutionary Workers!

The working class can not seize power from the bourgeoisie without its own revolutionary party. Such a party must be firmly rooted in the working class and must be international in nature. It must be an international party because the proletariat is an international class and its task is international: the overthrow of capital on a world scale.

There have been three revolutionary internationals: the International Workingmen's Association (First International) founded by Marx and Engels, the Socialist (Second) International which went over to the support of imperialism at the onset of the First Imperialist World War, and the Communist (Third) International which ceased to be revolutionary in 1921 when it supported the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) capitulation to capitalism in Russia by restoring capitalism and destroying the dictatorship of the proletariat instead of waging an intransigent revolutionary class struggle against the bourgeoisie and its agents.

The lack of a revolutionary party for the last half century has been the primary reason for the continued defeat of the proletariat in its struggle against world capital. There has been no revolutionary fourth international to take the place of the third as the second replaced the first after it dissolved and as the third replaced the second after its main organizations capitulated to national chauvinism.

In 1938 Leon Trotsky founded what he claimed was the revolutionary fourth international. However, Trotsky's

"Paris Bureau", the International Secretariat, was not and could not be a revolutionary party of the working class. The Trotskyist international was centrist to the core and unable to advance a revolutionary proletarian program. Today there are many "Fourth Internationals" all attempting to pattern themselves after Trotsky's "Paris Bureau" in one form or another. However, none of these "internationals" are revolutionary. The revolutionary fourth international maintaining the continuity of revolutionary Marxism with the First, Second and Third Internationals is yet to be built. That international will be the International Party of Revolutionary Workers.

In *From Trotskyism to Marxism* we wrote:

Even though the Fourth International was never a revolutionary international, it is our position that as the various centrists and reformists have totally besmirched its name, and in so far as the concept of a Fourth International is tied inexorably to Trotskyism, it is necessary to call for the building of a new, Fifth International. This international would, however, not be a Trotskyist International, but an international based on revolutionary Marxism.

This was incorrect. To call for a fifth international implies continuity with a fourth international. What fourth? The Trotskyist International? We wish to imply no such continuity. The Trotskyist International was never a revolutionary international. The last revolutionary international was the Third International of 1919-1921. It is necessary today to build a new fourth

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...Editorial

revolutionary international based not on Trotskyist centrism but on revolutionary Marxism, i.e. Bolshevik-Leninism.

Thus, we call on all revolutionary workers and revolutionary organizations throughout the world to build the in-

ternational party which will lead the world working class to victory over capitalism and to the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism: THE INTERNATIONAL PARTY OF REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS (FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)!

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Watergate and Fascism

by Ron Albertson

Part Two

Bourgeois democracy in action:



At the third Congress of the Communist International in 1921, under the pressure of bourgeois reaction, a centrist program was formulated. The Comintern leadership felt that the revolutionary upsurge had ended and that it was necessary to put forth "transitional" demands and form blocs with the reformist working class parties in order to "win the masses" and to defend each others right to exist. This concept of "transitional demands" and united fronts and defending the simple right of working class tendencies to exist in bourgeois society was developed even further by the Trotskyists. While working class tendencies should defend each others right to exist, the Trotskyists started from the viewpoint that working class organizations could exist under bourgeois democracy but not under fascism, thus a program of "fight for the lesser evil" was formulated. It was under this banner that the working class

was supposed to unite. The supposed "united front" in which the Bolsheviks had supposedly entered was supposed to be the model for the other Communist Parties to follow. Trotsky summarized this view by polemicizing that the united front is the soviet in embryonic form. It is true that the united front and the soviets shared one feature in common, a bridge between the different working class tendencies. But there is a huge qualitative difference between the two, specifically their respective programs and purposes. The soviet is an organ set up to seize power and create the dictatorship of the working class; the united front is a bloc of working class organizations set up for the defense of all or part of bourgeois democracy or some other issue relating thereto. Of course the Trotskyists could not call for soviets to battle the fascists because they were no longer organizing under a full revolutionary program.

Trotsky saw that there

was a contradiction between bourgeois democracy and fascism although not an absolute contradiction. He then formulated the thesis that this contradiction was great enough to supersede the class contradiction (fight for the "lesser evil"). The Stalinists on the other hand saw absolutely no difference between the two regimes and carried out a policy of retreat now fight later (Hitler today, Thalheimer tomorrow). The theory of "social fascism" in which the social-democrats were put forth as a wing of fascism was the Stalinists guiding theory. This misconception sprung from the fact that the Social-Democrats had a bourgeois program. The Stalinists could not see the difference between a working class tendency with a bourgeois program, and a bourgeois party.

The early Italian Communist Party under the leadership of Amadeo Bordiga saw that there was a difference between the fascists and bourgeois democrats but that this difference did not super-

sede class contradictions. For this correct view Trotsky later tried to put Bordiga and the Italian Left Fraction of International Communism in the same camp as the Stalinists.

It should be noted here that Trotsky's centrist line of blocking with social-democrats under the banner of bourgeois democracy in Germany led him further rightward into a reformist class collaborationist "military" bloc with the bourgeois democrats themselves in Spain.

To understand the difference between fascism and bourgeois democracy we must look to the origins of the bourgeois state itself.

To generalize, in most countries capitalism gained hegemony through the overthrow of feudalism by the collaboration of the bourgeoisie and the plebian masses (peasants, urban artisans, embryonic proletariat, sans-culottes, etc.). In such a situation where the masses, who struggled not for bourgeois property rights but for mass democracy, were armed, the bourgeoisie had to assert its authority and protect its rule by disarming these selfsame masses who had helped it to power. Since the bourgeoisie had developed far more freely under feudalism than any strata of the masses (it is because of their socio-economic development that they could play the role of a progressive revolutionary class) they achieved their goal with relative

ease (although not always without a struggle). This act of military suppression was a demonstration of the bourgeoisie's direct control and their ability to exercise this control through their own state which could be just as fierce as the feudal state had been. Even though the working class (what there was of it) for the most part was unconscious of its class interests, the bourgeoisie because of their size (a minority compared to the proletariat and the peasantry) and more importantly because of the significant role of the masses in the bourgeois revolution and the high ideals of democracy and equality that these revolutions had been carried out under, could not rest upon naked direct military control forever in fear that the proletariat and the peasantry would rise up in rebellion and take care of them as they had taken care of the feudal nobility. An indirect system of control was formed which also reflected the diversity of social power between the different sectors of the bourgeoisie. This became known as the parliamentary or democratic system. (Note: The reason why there is no such system existing today in Russia, China, Cuba, etc. is that there is no need for indirect control since the working class under the leadership of the Stalinists and their left offshoots believe these countries to be their (the workers) own states. There is also no reason for a parliament where a

new government is instituted every few years because the means of production are consolidated in the hands of a single "unified" bourgeoisie. Differences and clique struggles within this bourgeoisie need not be taken out into the open parliamentary arena.) Although the representative form of "democracy" was instituted by the bourgeoisie (who were still progressive at the time) under high idealistic standards (the rule of all the people, by the people, for the people, etc.) it was destined to become a farce (even for settling the problems of the bourgeoisie itself). All forms of government will inevitably reflect the social structure of that society. Just as bourgeois society is divided into classes with a division of labor, that division of labor reflects itself in parliaments, congresses and legislatures. Usually a sector of the bourgeois class (along with a host of their hangers-on) becomes the parliamentarians, the politicians who as Engels pointed out "make a business of politics, who speculate on seats in the legislative assemblies of the Union as well as of the separate states, or who make a living by carrying on agitation for their party and on its victory are rewarded with positions." Therefore the bourgeoisie is able to control its own state through the politicians, military leaders, judges, etc. who directly or indirectly re-

ly on the bourgeoisie for their financial backing and influence. In contemporary times, especially in the United States, we can see how different sectors of the bourgeoisie buy the use of the state for favors (recent milk price scandal, for example).

Universal suffrage is the thing that makes the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie appear to be so abstract. How is it that the bourgeoisie is able to control the politicians when "all" the people elect them? The answer is very simple: although all the people are allowed to vote, they are not able to participate directly in politics, mainly because they are not well enough educated and do not have the time or the access to the political state machinery itself. The idea behind having representatives is to let the representative take care of all the fine intricate parts of bourgeois politics (that is, to take care of all politics).

The bourgeoisie is able to control to a certain extent the opinions of the working class through the media, education and religious institutions in which they almost exclusively control.

When the institutions of bourgeois society, the media, the church, education and the illusion of democracy fail to contain the working class from reaching a class consciousness,

which usually occurs during an economic crisis through the socialist agitation of the revolutionary vanguard, the ruling class (the bourgeoisie) must resort to armed suppression of the working class. Fascism is the formation of armed bands of the bourgeoisie set up to protect their class interests against the proletariat when the forces of the state are not sufficient. Eventually these armed bands of frenetic petty-bourgeois and lumpen proletarians become fused with the state apparatus as in Germany.

We shall show from the lessons of Germany and Italy that the fascists are able to gain power in some cases through the elections of bourgeois democracy because they are in fact tied to the class which controls the bourgeois democratic state, the bourgeoisie. The bourgeois democrats handed over the German government and with it the control of the state to the fascists with no questions asked, let alone any struggle waged. When it comes down to it, the bourgeoisie, whether democratic or fascist will support their class interests against the proletariat. To ask the proletariat to fight for a bourgeois program (i.e. bourgeois democracy, the simple right of working class tendencies to exist) is reformism. To bloc with the democratic bourgeoisie (even militarily) is class collaboration. To ask for the reinstatement of the bourgeois-dem-

ocrats who just got finished handing over the government to the fascists is absurd. And to call for the defeat of fascism or for democracy against fascism without calling for the simultaneous proletarian socialist overthrow of capitalism, i.e. defeat fascism through proletarian revolution, is precisely that.

The only way to fight the fascists and ensure that working class tendencies can be free to exist is the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. a workers' republic.

To be continued

This series was originally planned to be a two part series. However, the format has been changed and it will be extended to a four part series. Part three will be printed in our August issue and will deal with the lessons of the rise of fascism in Germany in the 1930's. It will deal with the equally revisionist theories of the united front put forward by the Trotskyists and of social-fascism put forward by the Stalinists. Part four will be printed in our September issue and will deal with the rise of fascism in Italy in the early 1920's and the various reactions to it within the Communist International. The September issue will also carry in the Archives of the Revolution the document II Manifesto written by Italian Communist leader Amadeo Bordiga at that time

Trotskyism and Spain

by David Ross

The Spanish Civil War clearly poses the question of the Marxist analysis of the struggle between "democracy" and Fascism. Should the workers defend their lives, homes, trade unions and meetings against Fascist attacks? Absolutely! The working class can not sit idly by and allow itself and its organizations to be destroyed. However, the task of communists is to point out and bring the class to the consciousness that only the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism can deal the death blow to Fascism. Tying the proletariat to defense of "democracy" only opens the way for defeat. It can not lead the way to victory.

But this is sectarian, cry the Trotskyists. What if the proletariat has illusions in bourgeois-democracy but is ready to fight the Fascists? What do you do then? Their answer is provided by the role of their movement in Spain in the 1930's Civil War. Since the proletariat had illusions in bourgeois-democracy and the Popular Front, but was ready to fight the Fascists, the Trotskyists called on the Spanish workers to form a military bloc with the Popular Front and the bourgeois government, and fight the Fascists! This is nothing more than opportunism of the grossest sort! If your program calls for the

revolutionary struggle against all wings of capitalism, but the working class is not ready to accept it, no matter. Shelve it for the future and put forward a program which the workers will accept. Then, through "struggle" (and defeat) they will see that your original program was correct and the next time (for now it is too late) they will wage a more militant and class conscious struggle. Such is the much-ballyhooed "transitional" approach of the Trotskyists.

And the fact that the bloc was "only" military and "not" political? This sophistry was taken up quite ably by the Joerger-Salemme group within the Trotskyist faction of the Socialist Party in 1937:

...Any sober Marxist politician knows that aid or power for any government consists of economic wealth and military ordinance. We also know that in a revolutionary situation the propertyless proletariat has power when it is united under a Marxist leadership and has arms in its hands. "Material aid" is one of the best forms of aid (or support) any government can receive. Those who take the position of "Material aid but no political support to the Loyalist government" show that in reality their line leads them, objectively, to aiding in the best manner the capitalist Spanish government. Do we aid the

Bourgeois Loyalist government or do we prepare for its overthrow by sending "Material aid but no political support" to the counter-revolutionists? Obviously, we aid the government to maintain its rule over the proletariat.

We oppose this government but we proceed to give it arms. Now the giving of arms to any government is determined, by a political interest in the maintenance and preservation of any government that one proceeds to arm. To revolutionary Marxists, it is clear beyond any question that the most advanced form of political support which the Social-Democrats could have given and actually gave the imperialists during the last world war was to vote war credits and in other ways support the armament program of their respective capitalist governments. Giving arms to a bourgeois government in spite of all the ugly names one may call it, is the clearest and most decisive kind of political support (certainly more meaningful than ballots) and especially since one arms it even while one calls it bad names. It is political support to capitalism covered by "critical" demagoguery.

How does Trotsky answer the Joerger-Salemme group? With sophism, capitulatory objectivism and par-

liamentary cretinism:

Yes, we know that our comrades are shot by the governments's Cheka, but what conclusion does the Salemm group draw? Do they propose desertion from the loyalist army, or a military insurrection? If desertion, where to? Surely not into the camp of Franco. If the government mobilized the workers and peasants, what does refusal to give it military aid signify? It can only signify desertion or insurrection. Or do they mean a general strike? A general strike, especially during a war, can only be with the aim of overthrowing the government, can only be an introduction to an insurrection. I agree fully that if we can call the people to insurrection, we must do so. But can we do it? I would like to know how numerous are the Salemm regiments in Spain, if its resolution was written for Spain and not for the political satisfaction of the author. (How numerous were Trotsky's regiments in Spain which he claimed would independently bloc with the Loyalists? Or was he writing simply for his own "political satisfaction?" --D.R.) If we ask the soldier not to fight, then we must ask the worker (who by working in the munitions factory gives "material aid" to the loyalist government) not to work.

But if, as is the case, we are not strong enough now to seize power, we must *militarily* fight against Franco under the material conditions determined by the relationship of forces, while at the same time we *politically* prepare for the insurrection against Negrin.

(*The Spanish Revolution: (1931-39)*, p. 286)

Trotsky does not answer the question of as to how one prepares the workers for insurrection while urging them to put their lives on the line in "politically independent" military support to their oppressor.

Here too we do not support Negrin politically. If we were to have a member in the Cortes (Spanish parliament--D.R.), he would vote against the military budget of Negrin*... *To vote for the military budget of the Negrin government signifies to vote him *political* confidence. We cannot do it. To do it would be a crime. How can we explain our vote to the Anarchist workers? Very simply: We can not have the slightest confidence in the capacity of this government to conduct the war and assure victory. We accuse this government of protecting the rich and starving the poor. This government must be smashed. So long as we are not strong enough to replace it, we are fighting under its command. But on every occasion we express openly our nonconfidence in it: it is the only

possible way to mobilize the masses *politically* against this government and to prepare its overthrow. Any other politics would be a betrayal of the revolution.

(*Ibid.*, pp. 287-288)

Where is Trotsky's "independence" now? "This government must be smashed. So long as we are not strong enough to replace it, we are fighting under its command." (my emphasis-D.R.) Will the Trotskyists try to tell us that Lenin said that so long as the Provisional Government could not be smashed, that the Bolsheviks and workers should fight under its *bourgeois* command, as they falsely claim that he called for a military-technical bloc with the Provisional Government against Kornilov (see *SL-RCY Falsifies History, Defends Class Collaboration in the June 1917 Workers' Truth*)? Needless to say, it is quite clear here that for Trotsky "political" support means "parliamentary" support. Politics equals parliamentarism. Thus, so long as one does not call for a vote for Caballero, Valencia or Negrin one is safe. One can give all the military and other extra-parliamentary support in the world so long as one keeps away from the ballot box. The height of this absurdity can be seen where Trotsky proudly states that a Trotskyist member of the Cortes would vote against money for war appropriations, that is, money to pay for the self-same bullets about which Trotsky has

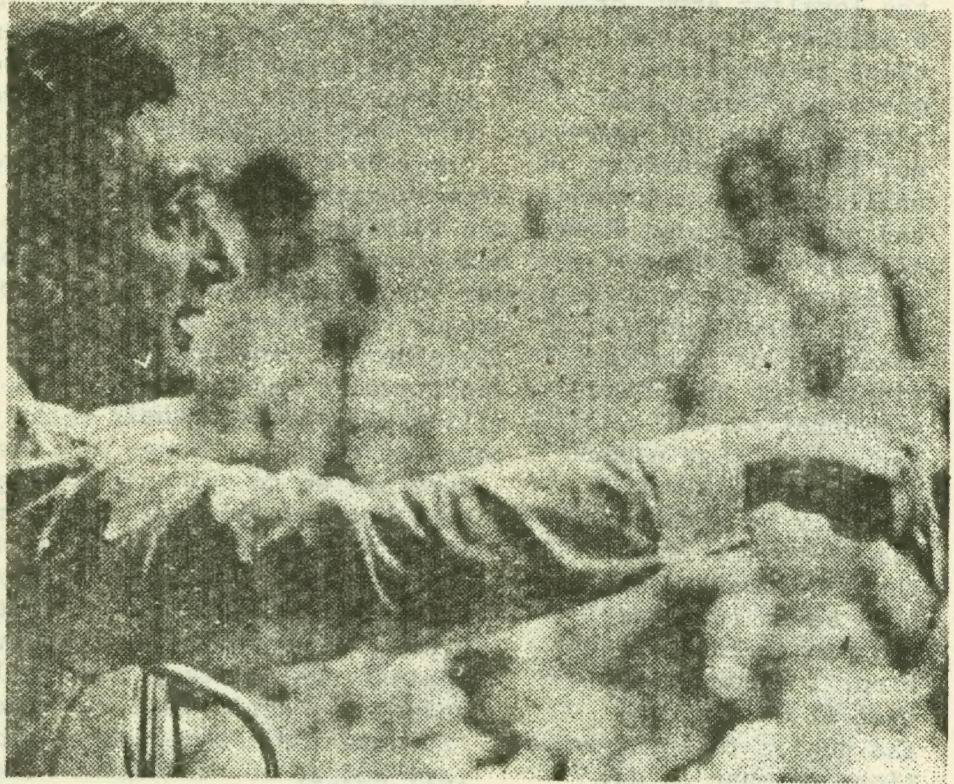
The Economy of State Capitalism

Part Four

by David Ross

Trotskyists use same false mechanical logic to defend "proletarian" nature of production in the Soviet Union that United Secretariat leader Ernest Mandel uses to defend "existence" of neo-capitalism, a supposed third stage of capitalism.

With this issue we continue the serialization of the pamphlet The Economy of State Capitalism begun in our April issue. This pamphlet illustrates and analyzes the capitalist character of the Soviet Union's economy and by extension those countries with similar economies.



Stakhanovism and Capitalist Economy

The main purpose of the Stakhanovite movement in the Soviet Union was to raise the level of productivity. Trotsky describes the Stakhanovite movement as being:

...an intensification of labor, and even...a lengthening of the working day. During the so-called "nonworking" time, the Stakhanovists put their benches and tools in order and sort their raw material, the brigadiers instruct their brigades, etc. Of the seven-hour working day there thus remains nothing but the name.

It was not the Soviet administrators who invented the secret of piecework payment. That system, which strains the nerves without visible external compulsion, Marx considered "the most suitable to capitalistic methods of production." The workers greeted this innovation not only without sympathy, but with hostility. It would have been unnatural to expect anything else of them...

(1)

How is it, we must ask, that the sys-

tem which Marx saw as "the most suitable to capitalistic methods of production" could fit into "proletarian" production? After all, Stakhanovism was part of *production*, not distribution, which Trotsky already agreed was bourgeois. The answer lies in the fact that it was not fitting into "proletarian" production, but capitalist production. In the advanced countries of Western Europe and North America trade union battles were waged against the capitalists and their use of the piecework system in favor of an hourly wage rate. Today the only factories where piecework predominates are those factories which remain unorganized. However, in the Soviet Union, the unions, like those in the Fascist countries, are subordinate to the state and such a struggle could not be waged. Trotsky points out further on that:

...a growth in the number of Stakhanovists is frequently accompanied, not with an increase, but a decrease of the general productivity of the enterprises. (2)

But how can this be? Are we not refer-

ring to the land of the planned economy? Could it be that the anarchy of capitalism is perhaps seeping into the "proletarian" economy? The reason for the lag in productivity is that the human body can only perform so much. This is not, however, taken into account by the Soviet rulers. Just as capitalists in the United States or Germany do not care one iota for the health of their workers and will speed up the line as much as possible, so too, the capitalists in the Soviet Union will administer as much speed-up as they can get away with. The Stalinists can paint speed-up and piecework with as many happy phrases like "socialist emulation" as they want to. It will not change reality. And in those cases where productivity was increased and where production increased, did the workers reap any benefits from this? Some. That is, some workers, not some benefits. To the Stakhanovists, themselves, that is, the newly formed aristocracy of labor, who by their total capitulation to the speed-up managed to produce more than their coworkers, some luxuries, such as watches, cameras, and phonographs (which are not luxuries in the West to a great degree) were more readily available. However, the position of the average Soviet worker, even with the increase in productivity, was aptly summed up by Raya Dunayevskaya:

The average worker continued to eat black bread and have his *kipyatok* (hot water). (3)

Thus, we can see that along with its commodity production and production for surplus-value, the Soviet economy contains the method which Marx saw as "the most suitable to capitalistic methods of production." The reason that the Soviet Union adopted Stakhanovism, i.e., piecework payment is precisely because it is "most suitable" to the Soviet methods of production, i.e., capitalist production. Even prior to the victory of socialism, i.e., the triumph of humanity over nature and an abundance of goods, the socialist norm of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his need" will still be the norm, although there will probably be some deviations from this. First of all, no one will

receive according to his needs. However, everyone will be looked upon as equal and no one's needs will take precedence over another's. Thus, the piecework payment in which those who are stronger and have more stamina and can thus produce more, receive more will be out of the question under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a system is a system where "from each according to his work (not ability), to each according to his work" is the norm. This in fact is precisely what the workers have under capitalism. Piecework is not a mistake made by a distorted dictatorship of the proletariat, it is the method by which the most can be extracted from the working class at the least expense for the capitalists. Thus, more for the pockets of the capitalists and more to be accumulated as capital. No Marxist would apologize for Stakhanovism as Trotsky did in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

Although at a first glance the return of the Soviet government, after "the final and irrevocable triumph of socialism," to piecework payment might seem a retreat to capitalist relations, in reality it is necessary to repeat here what was said about the rehabilitation of the ruble. It is not a question of renouncing socialism, but merely of abandoning crude illusions. The form of wage payment is simply brought into better correspondence with the real resources of the country. "Law can never be higher than the economic structure." (4)

We would agree with one point of Trotsky's disgusting apology for Stalinist exploitation: the introduction of piecework was not a retreat to capitalism, capitalism was already there.

In summing up our discussion of Stakhanovism we will quote two passages from Tony Cliff's *Russia: A Marxist Analysis*. The first concerns the way in which the workers' standards of living are depressed through the productivity increase and the second concerns the Stalinist view of the American form of Stakhanovism, "Taylorism," as counterposed to Lenin's view.

The progressive piecework system enables the state to depress the workers' standard of living by continually raising the basic production norms.

In fact, the launching of the Stakhanovite campaign at the end of 1935 was followed by changes in the norms of output in every industry. The new norms were not determined by the output of the average worker, but by "averaging the production of Stakhanovites with the average of other workers."

Sometimes Stalinist writers are careless enough to draw a parallel between Stakhanovism and the most refined method of capitalist-exploitation--Taylorism. Thus, for instance, in a manual designed for higher educational institutions of the petroleum industry, this remark is made: "The views and methods of Taylor in the field of increased utilization of implements of labour are unconditionally progressive."

(One should compare this with Lenin's characterisation of Taylorism as "the enslavement of man by the machine." (5))

No doubt Trotsky would see Taylorism as applied to an economically backward workers' state as being nothing more nor less than bringing "The form of wage payment...into better correspondence with the real resources of the country."

Planned Economy and the Law of Value

Much is made of the fact that the Soviet Union has a planned economy. It is asserted that since the Soviet Union has a planned economy it is free from the anarchy of production which characterizes capitalism. It is also asserted that the Soviet Union is thus free from the effects of the law of value which is an operational law of the capitalist system of production. First let us refer to the law of value as Marx defines it:

The law of value dominates price movements with reductions or increases in required labour-time making prices of production fall or rise. It is in this sense that Ricardo (who doubtlessly realised that his prices of production deviated from the value of commodities) says that "the inquiry to which I wish to draw the reader's attention relates to the effect of the variations in the relative value of commodities, and

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not in their absolute value." (6) Those who deny the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union assert that since the economy in the Soviet Union is planned and that the Soviet bureaucrats can manipulate prices, that this proves that the Soviet economy does not function under the law of value. However, Engels wrote in his criticism of the Erfurt program the following on planning under capitalism:

When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which assume control over, and monopolise, whole industries, it is not only private production that ceases but also planlessness. (7)

Lenin elaborated on this point by Engels as follows:

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, i.e., imperialism, namely, that capitalism becomes monopoly *capitalism*. The latter must be emphasised because the erroneous bourgeois reformist assertion that monopoly capitalism or state monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can now be called "state socialism" and so on, is very common. The trusts, of course, never provided, do not now provide and cannot provide complete planning. But however much they do plan, however much the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and however much they systematically regulate it, we still remain under *capitalism*--at its new stage, it is true, but still capitalism, without a doubt.... (8)

Both Engels and Lenin pointed out the tendency for planning to develop under capitalism. Price manipulation is no sign of an end to capitalist production. It goes on every day in the United States. It is vulgar formalism to say that the law of value forces the capitalists to set their prices at a certain level from day to day or from week to week. However, they must set their prices in the general limits laid out by the socially necessary labor-time to produce the commodities. If such were not the case, how is it that after the war when the Soviet Union was flooded with Ford tractors which were made

cheaper than Soviet tractors, that in order to compete with the Ford tractors, the Soviets were forced to sell their own tractors at less than cost?

It is true that in the Soviet Union capital does not flow back and forth from one sector to another. However, it is also true that the Soviet Union for all its planning can not have a balance between production of the means of production and production of consumer goods. Since the Soviet Union has the character of a giant corporation which has in its hands all of industrial production, Soviet rulers are able to (to a certain extent) keep capital in those sectors where they desire it. However, as Raya Dunayevskaya points out in *Marxism and Freedom*:

...It was impossible simultaneously to extend production of the means of production as well as production of the means of consumption. One or the other had to be sacrificed. It was so under competitive, "market" capitalism. It proved to be so under autarchic, statified production. The constant necessity to expand in order to "catch up with and outdistance the capitalist lands" the high organic composition of capital in the advanced capitalist world which imposed the same technical composition upon the Russian economy--all these demanded sacrifice in the sphere of producing articles for mass consumption. Distribution of articles for mass consumption had to be brought into conformity with the reality of the stage of production. It was not a question, as Trotsky thought, of "bourgeois norms of distribution". It was a matter of the *bourgeois method of production*. In his Preface to CAPITAL, Marx explained that he did not paint the capitalist and landlord in *couleur de rose* not because, as individuals, they were necessarily evil, "But here individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relationships and class-interests. (9)

Production in the Soviet Union can not remain balanced between production of

capital and production of consumer goods any more than in the other capitalist countries. It must dominate in either one sector or the other. It can not be had both ways. Such is definitely not the planned economy of a state controlled by the working class.

The nature of the Soviet Union as a large corporation (so to speak, in the economic sense) means that the law of value affects the internal economy of the Soviet Union in a distorted form. For instance in the United States, in those trusts which control not only the production of the certain commodity, but also the raw materials for that commodity, the Law of Value does not directly apply in moving the raw material from the mine to the factory. There is no competition. However, as it still requires a certain socially necessary amount of labor-time to move that raw material the cost for the trust remains within certain limits imposed upon it by that socially necessary labor-time. Such is also the case in the Soviet Union. Thus, costs in the Soviet Union are not qualitatively different from those on the world market, nor are Soviet prices. The driving force behind cost and price in the Soviet Union is socially necessary labor-time, just as in other capitalist countries. For all of its economic protectionism, the Soviet Union can not escape the effects of the world market, whether it is exchanging goods within its own boundaries or participating in world trade.

In returning to the question of the planned economy itself, we should first look at what Engels had to say about the planned economy after capitalism had been defeated and the workers had taken power:

...With this recognition at last of the real nature of the productive forces of today, the social anarchy of production gives place to a social regulation of production upon a definite plan, according to the needs of the community and of each individual. ... (10)

Engels does not say that social anarchy gives way to any old plan, but a plan by and in the interests of the producers themselves, i.e., the working class.

Such is not the plan in the Soviet Union. It is a plan which is carried

out by the Soviet rulers in their own interests, and which is based, as we have shown, on the effects of the Law of Value and the world market. Even Stalin stated quite unequivocally:

It is sometimes asked whether the law of value exists and operates in our country, under the socialist system.

Yes, it does exist and does operate.

* * * * *

Is the law of value the basic economic law of capitalism? No. (11)

Marx and Engels would have had the following to say to Stalin. First Engels:

The "exchange of labour against labour on the principle of equal value," insofar as it has any meaning, that is to say, the exchangeability against each other of products of equal social labour, that is to say, the law of value, is precisely the fundamental law of commodity production, hence also of its highest form, capitalist production.... (12)

Next Marx:

Value is the expression of the *specifically characteristic nature* of the capitalist process of production. (13)

Stalin "let's the cat out of the bag" so to speak when he admits to the existence of the Law of Value as regards Soviet economy. He adds:

Talk of labour power being a commodity, and of "hiring" of workers sounds rather absurd now, under our system: as though the working class, which possesses means of production, hires itself and sells its labour power to itself. (14)

It does sound absurd if one believes that the Soviet state belongs to the workers. But to the Russian worker who possesses only his labor -power insofar as he possesses means of production it surely does not sound so absurd.

But the plan! What about the plan? Yes, what about the plan? Is it so omnipotent as the Stalinists and their Trotskyist apologists would have us believe? Or is it more like the planning which Engels and Lenin discussed in planning under capitalism? It is certainly a far cry from the planning under a workers' state visualized by Engels. First of all, the Russian plan

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has not stopped the rate of growth from decreasing over the past period, nor has it stopped inflation (perhaps inflation and a decreasing rate of growth in the Soviet Union are part of the plan?). The fact of inflation in the Soviet Union is undeniable. Trotsky devotes no less than six pages of *The Revolution Betrayed* to describing its pernicious effects on the Soviet economy, and the use of various attempts at stopping it, like production-cost accounting. This Trotsky attempts to label as the "norms of bourgeois right" meaning the hangover of aspects of bourgeois distribution in transitional society. This, however, is another apology for bourgeois *production* in the Soviet Union.

Marxists view inflation as the result of an oversupply of currency. That is, more paper money is produced than there exists gold (or some other precious metal) to back it up. However, in a society which is free from the effects of the Law of Value and which produces not exchange-values, but use-values, this would make no difference. Money would not be money, but merely a means of distributing use-values to the population. Inflation would cause no problems in such a society. However, such is not the case with the Soviet Union. Trotsky did not write on the ills of Soviet economy caused by inflation of the ruble for nothing. The direct effect of inflation on the Soviet economy represents another feature of its capitalist nature and testifies to the inefficiency of the capitalist plan in the Soviet Union.

We already noted that the Soviet plan could not balance the economy between the two sectors of capital goods production and consumer goods production. Other aspects of the failure of the Soviet plan have been noted by various bourgeois analysts of the Soviet economy. For instance:

In the short run, planning of the Soviet type creates serious bottlenecks in some branches and "unplanned" surpluses in others. (15)

The continued turn towards a more decentralized form of production management coupled with the various failures and inefficiencies of what the Trotskyists term "bureaucratic mismanagement"

have been touted by bourgeois economists as examples of the failure of socialism and the superiority of capitalism. On the contrary, they merely point up the inability of planning to be fully successful under capitalism. The economy will only be planned successfully when the planning is done by the producers themselves in a workers' state.

The Trotskyists maintain that the proletariat is viewed by Marxists as the revolutionary class not because of some moral reason, but because they are the only class which can advance the means of production. While this is true, as far as it goes, when they use it as a defense of the Soviet Union, it reeks of vulgar economic determinism. The reason that the means of production must be advanced is so that humanity can finally assert itself as the master of nature. So that for the first time humanity can really be free. The fact that the means of production have been advanced under state capitalism in the Soviet Union, does not transform the Soviet Union into a workers' state, which is one of the Trotskyist arguments: the proletariat is the revolutionary class because it is the only class which can advance the means of production; the means of production have been advanced in the Soviet Union to a great extent; ergo., the Soviet Union is a workers' state.

This tautological display of Aristotelianism which masquerades as the Marxist dialectic totally forgets about the condition of the working class. Under a workers' state, the advances in the means of production will benefit the working class. Under capitalism technical advances during the epoch of imperialism are reactionary as regards the condition of the working class. They are antithetical to the interests of the proletariat and react against it. The same argument which the Trotskyists use to defend the "proletarian nature of the Soviet Union" is precisely the argument which the Mandelians use to defend Neo-Capitalism as a third stage of capitalism turned on its head. Can you deny computers? Can you deny atomic energy? Can you deny transistors? Can you deny containerization? Can you deny all these advances

in the means of production under capitalism? No. However, that does not mean that capitalism has achieved a new stage, as the Mandelians maintain, nor does it prove that the Soviet Union is not capitalist as the Trotskyists maintain. The advances in the means of production in the Soviet Union have been beneficial only to a small minority of that society, those who control the means of production, the capitalist class. Likewise, advances in the productive forces in the West have been beneficial only to a small minority of society, those who control the means of production, the capitalist class.

Secondly, we must ask the Trotskyists, what qualitative advances have been made in the Soviet Union? When capitalism first became the dominant mode of production in England, and the English bourgeoisie seized political power, it took very little time for the productive forces to far outstrip the productive forces of the most advanced of the feudal countries, no matter how backward the English bourgeois political regime. This, however, has not been the case in the Soviet Union. While the productive forces have advanced to a great extent (and there are reasons for this which we will deal with shortly) they have not surpassed those of the most advanced of the capitalist countries, notably the United States. It would appear that Marxists would expect a new mode of production to rapidly outstrip those countries which still operated under a more backward mode of production, despite weaknesses in the political regime, and the mode of distribution (conceding for argument's sake that the mode of production and the mode of distribution can be severed from each other). The fact that the Soviet Union has not been able to outstrip the most advanced of capitalist countries is another refutation of the "proletarian nature" of the Soviet economy and state. The reason that the Soviet Union has not made the qualitative advances necessary to enable its mode of production to be labelled a new mode of production is precisely because it is not a new mode of production, but simply a form of capitalist production.

There are, however, great quantitative

advances which have been made in the Soviet economy. It is important, however, to note their quantitative nature when viewed in the context of the world economy as a whole. Marxists must draw a clear line of distinction between quantity and quality. The three basic reasons for the vast quantitative advances in the Soviet Union are: 1) the availability of large amounts of cheap raw materials; 2) a protectionist trade policy; 3) a prostrated proletariat unable to wrest any concessions from the capitalist class. Given these three conditions, any capitalist country could have made such advances.

If a country has the raw materials necessary for production of commodities in great supply within its own boundaries it will naturally be at an advantageous position in respect to those countries which have shortages of raw materials and are forced to import them. The Soviet Union covers a vast expanse of territory and is rich in minerals and other natural resources necessary to large-scale production. Also, the Soviet Union was blessed with the advanced physical plant which was left over from imperialist investment in Russia during Tsarist times.

It has been a general characteristic of those capitalist countries which have wished to build up their own economies and not be flooded by cheaper goods from more advanced countries, to carry out a policy of economic protectionism in the trade sphere. Such was the use which the state monopoly of trade was put to in the Soviet Union. By keeping out foreign manufactured goods, it was thus assured of a market for its own goods despite their poor quality and high cost of production. This could not have happened if more advanced capitalist countries had been allowed to flood the Russian market with cheaper, better quality goods.

Probably most important, though, is the utter prostration of the Soviet proletariat at the feet of its capitalist masters. It is quite simple to observe that the less the proletariat receives in wages, the more the capitalists will profit and the more they will be able to reinvest in the means

of production as capital. The fact that the trade unions in the Soviet Union are completely under the control of the state as in the Fascist countries, leaves the state with a free hand as regards wages. While wage controls may be new in the United States, they are nothing in the Soviet Union. As Liberman points out in his defense of the Soviet economy:

...The level of payment for labour depends on its productivity and is regulated by law. (16)

This prostration of the proletariat to the capitalist state has allowed for the great advances made in the productive forces in the Soviet Union. These advances have been made, however, at the expense of the Soviet working class. In fact, the Soviet Union is probably the prime example of productive advances under capitalism during its epoch of decay being made at the expense of the material conditions of the working class. Raya Dunayevskaya points out in *Marxism and Freedom*:

The statistical measurement of the Russian economy is presented here not in order to enter into the field of dispute as to the phenomenal or nonphenomenal development of Russian industrialization. Nor, as important as that may be, is the author interested in the correct weighting of the official figures. The fundamental purpose of this table of Russian industrialization, rather, was to show the *direction* in which the Russian economy moved, during the years of the Plans, before World War II wrought its destruction. It is clear from this that the direction of its growth--the preponderance of means of production over means of consumption, the high organic composition of capital, and the rapid deterioration of the living standards of the masses--is neither merely accidental nor due to "war conditions" but was the inevitable consequence of the law of motion of that economy which, like any other capitalist economy, rests on paying the worker at minimum and extracting from him the maximum.

From the statistical table it was seen that this author's estimate of the real weekly wages of the average Russian worker, in 1940, was only

62.4 percent that of 1913...

Using 1913 as 100, the cost of food for 1928 is 187, and for 1940 is 2,248. The weekly wages for those years were: 1913, six rubles; 1928, fourteen rubles; and 1940, 83 rubles. Again using 1913 as our base year for nominal weekly wages, we have an index for 1928 of 233, and for 1940 of 1,383. We can now construct our index of real wages by dividing the nominal weekly wage into the real cost of food, thus obtaining 125 as the index of real wages in 1928 and 62.4 percent for 1940, when compared to Tsarist times. Had we considered the further rise in food prices by October, 1940, it would have been a mere 55 percent of 1913! And even that appallingly low figure, which so glaringly proves the deterioration in the worker's standard of living, does not picture the situation at its worst, for we have considered the single uniform price in 1940 and not the open market price (to which the worker sometimes had to resort because few foods were available in State stores). On the average, the open market prices were 78 percent higher than the State store prices! There is supposed to be no black market in Russia but in the officially recognized free market beefsteak sold for seventeen rubles a kilo when the State stores sold the same commodity at ten and a half rubles!

(17)

This should make it quite clear that any and all advances in the Soviet productive forces have been made at the expense of the Soviet workers. We must ask the question (and the Trotskyists,

Stalinists and all other defenders of the Soviet state must answer it): What kind of workers' state is it (deformed, degenerated or otherwise) in which the workers are worse off than if they were living under the Tsar?

All the technological advances, all the economic plans, and all the nationalized properties in the world mean nothing if they are not used to further the development and living conditions of the working class. If they are not used in that manner they merely represent tools used in the crushing of the working class and the profiteering of the capitalists.

To be continued

NOTES

- (1) Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 80
- (2) *Ibid.*, p. 85, emphasis in original
- (3) Dunayevskaya, *Marxism and Freedom*, p. 223
- (4) Trotsky, *op. cit.*, p. 81
- (5) Cliff, *Russia: A Marxist Analysis*, p. 24, p. 25
- (6) Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, p. 179
- (7) *Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1, 1901-02, p. 8
- (8) Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 442-443, emphasis in original
- (9) Dunayevskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 223, emphasis in original
- (10) Engels, *Socialist: Utopian and Scientific*, pp. 68-69
- (11) from Cliff, *op. cit.*, p. 148
- (12) Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, pp. 340-341
- (13) from Cliff, *op. cit.*, p. 148, emphasis is not ours
- (14) *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149
- (15) Spulber, *The Soviet Economy: Structure, Principles, Problems*, p. 268
- (16) *Theory of Profit in Socialist Economy*, p. 11
- (17) Dunayevskaya, *op. cit.*, p. 232, p. 233, emphasis in original

The Workers Party 1940-1949

A Re-Evaluation

In *From Trotskyism to Marxism* we wrote the following about the Shachtmanite Workers Party of the 1940's:

In 1940 the split in the SWP was a split

along political class lines. The revolutionary internationalists formed the Workers Party, while the centrist defenders of Soviet imperialism remained in

the Socialist Workers Party and the Fourth International. However, since the bulk of the Workers Party cadre were petty bourgeois, had been trained in the

'school of Trotskyism, maintained the incorrect Bolshevik program on the national question and failed to grapple successfully with the class nature of the Soviet Union, they were unable to maintain a revolutionary character throughout the war and degenerated to centrism with their support to the "Three Theses" of the IKD in 1942. The degeneration of the WP continued at a rapid rate until 1948-49 when they made the plunge into reformist politics.

This analysis of the Workers Party is incorrect. Further study, discussion and analysis has brought us to the conclusion that the Workers Party never had a revolutionary character, although some of its positions such as the position of opposition to both sides and for the independent struggle of the proletariat in the Russo-Finnish war were revolutionary. The fact that the WP was never revolutionary, of course, does not make the SWP any better than we saw it before. The Cannonite Trotskyists were as we stated "centrist defenders of Soviet imperialism."

The Workers Party never broke from Trotskyism on anything of substance except the Russian question and the question of party organization. On the Russian question it took the position that the Soviet Union was bureaucratic collectivist

with a new class society. This analysis is equally if not more atrocious than the Trotskyist viewpoint of the "degenerated workers state." On the organizational question the WP overreacted to the Cannonite bureaucracy of the SWP and adopted not Bolshevik democratic-centralism, but a Menshevik concept of organization, even going so far as to continually allow what should have been internal discussion of minority views to appear in the pages of the party's agitational and propaganda organ *Labor Action*. The WP held to the Trotskyist position on the colonial question, on the question of military support to bourgeois democracy against Fascism, on the trade union question, on parliamentarism, on the policy of the united front, on support to the centrist conception of a transitional program leading from the reformist consciousness of the workers to revolutionary consciousness "through struggle."

The program of the Workers Party in 1940 was centrist not revolutionary. However, like the SWP at that time its program was left centrist, that is, its revolutionary impulses outweighed its reformist appetites. In 1942 when the WP supported the "Three Theses" of the IKD which called for a struggle in favor of bourgeois democracy against Fascism, with the socialist revolution relegated to the far future, (the IKD and the WP felt that European society had been thrown back to an-

other epoch by Nazism and that the struggle for the revival of bourgeois-democratic societies was on the order of the day as it had been in the struggle of the capitalists against feudalism.) the reformist appetites of the Workers Party had gained dominance over the revolutionary impulses. The WP had become right centrist. By 1949 the last of the revolutionary impulses had been wiped out and the WP changed its name to the International Socialist League as it marked its transformation into a reformist grouping. Eight years later it was to liquidate itself into the American wing of Social-Democracy. Shachtman, the main leader of the WP-ISL throughout its seventeen year history, died in 1972 a supporter of the Humphrey wing of the Democratic Party.

* * * * *

DEFEND THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE!

The Revolutionary Workers Group condemns the attacks of the French government on the Ligue Communiste. Although we have severe political differences with the LC we defend them against the attacks of the bourgeois state. We call for the release of all LC members from jail and for an end to their harassment.

DEFEND THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE!

* * * * *

Trade Unions Today

Fitzsimmons and the Teamster Contract

by Ron Albertson

Trade Unions Today is a regular feature of Workers' Truth. Future issues will contain articles dealing with the problems facing various individual trade unions as well as issues relating to all trade unions. This month's article deals with the recent contract negotiated by Frank Fitzsimmons and the trucking industry magnates for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

An agreement has been reached by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters bureaucracy headed by Frank Fitzsimmons with the trucking industry. The proposed contract at the time of this writing, has yet to be approved by the union's membership. The main point of the contract is for an overall 7.2% increase in wages and fringe benefits for the first year, and a 4.7% increase in the second year. These proposals have gone by with the approval of the Cost of Living Council which is in no way surprising, considering their closeness to the guidelines set up by Nixon under Phase III of 6.2% in total benefits.

The true interests of the union bureaucrats such as Fitzsimmons, Meany, Abel, Gibbons, Woodcock, Chavez, etc. are becoming increasingly apparent. Meany, Fitzsimmons, Abel, Woodcock and Hall have all agreed to sit on Nixon's National Commission for

Industrial Peace. This commission was set up to "explore ways of settling critical labor-management disputes short of strikes and lockouts." The object of the commission goes even further by saying it will "facilitate resolution of disputes and constructive bargaining in the *public interest*." The idea of "public interest" is simply a sugar-coated way of saying the capitalists' interests. It is obvious that the bureaucrats are now ready to give away the unions' basic instrument of power, the strike. To the bureaucrats, the interest of stabilizing the capitalist crisis supersedes the interests of the workers.

Probably the most disgusting part of Fitzsimmons's record is his dealings with the farmworkers in the Southwest. Goons have been hired to harass striking workers while at the same time sellout "sweetheart" contracts have been signed with the growers. The Teamsters membership must repudiate this policy and unite

with the farmworkers and support their fight for representation of their own choosing.

The Fitzsimmons-negotiated contract with the trucking industry is a sellout contract and should be thrown out. The Teamster ranks should negotiate a contract which will give them more than the scraps offered by Fitzsimmons and his businessmen cronies. The Teamsters should introduce into their new contract an across the board wage increase of some concrete sum agreed upon by the membership. This would allow a more equitable pay increase for all members instead of a percentage increase. In other words workers making \$6.35 an hour and workers making \$5.35 would get the same raise. Under the percentage basis the worker getting \$6.35/hr. would continually get larger increases than the other worker. A substantial across the board increase would tend to equalize the wage differential but not at the expense of the higher paid

Fitzsimmons and the farmworkers:

KELLY

by JACK MOORE



workers.

The union should also set up a union hiring hall so that the workers would be able to distribute the jobs more evenly. Any time the capitalists wanted something hauled they would have to go to the hiring hall. Of course, with this demand it is essential that a struggle for rank-and-file democracy be waged in the Teamsters. A Fitzsimmons-run hiring hall is almost as bad as no hiring hall. Rank-and-filers should democratically organize a rotation system.

All productivity clauses must also be fought. It should not be the concern of the workers whether the trucking industry makes more profits or not. Any increase in production must be made by hiring more workers at no cut in pay.

However, contract de-

mands are not enough. A "good" contract can only slightly soften the hardships of the workers' life under capitalism. Capitalism must be destroyed if the working class is to have a really decent life. That is why Fitzsimmons and the other bureaucrats must be kicked out of the unions and a revolutionary leadership put in their place. Thus, we do not restrict ourselves to contract demands. Along with these demands we call for the adoption of our full communist program by the unions, unlike other working class tendencies.

The International Socialists (IS) restricts its demands to purely economic reforms (get a little more from the capitalists but don't try to take it all). The Workers League goes a little further by displaying their fetish for the formation of a labor party along with

their economic demands. This labor party would basically fill the reformist vacuum left by the virtual collapse of the Democratic Party, and would essentially fight for economic reforms not qualitatively different from those proposed by the IS. The Workers League also calls for Fitzsimmons to resign not from the union but from the Cost of Living Council. Fitzsimmons and the other bureaucrats are a bourgeois clique who belong on the council along with the other representatives of the capitalist class. Where they don't belong is in the workers' unions.

Somewhat to the left of the Workers League and the IS is the Class Struggle League (CSL). The CSL calls for the formation of independent (not only from the bureaucrats but also from themselves) caucuses and the building of a labor

party. The formation of an independent caucus movement outside the party is incorrect as we have explained before in our press. (See *Which Way for the Trade Unions*, March-June issues of *Workers' Truth*) With the formation of such caucuses the party will inevitably have to choose eventually between destroying them or liquidating into them. It makes little difference that the CSL calls for independent caucuses, though, because its program in the unions is not even its own centrist one, but instead a reformist one similar to that of the Workers League. Their program consists of four points: 1) organize the unorganized; 2) build a labor party; 3) Sliding scale of hours and wages--30 for 40 to provide work for all those who need it without cuts in pay; 4) "Let companies that complain that they can't afford to pay reasonable wage and benefit increases open the books and prove it. If they

can't pay workers must fight for state ownership of that industry, rather than allow their jobs to be thrown on the scrap heap."

The last demand is exceptionally bad since there is no mention in the whole program of workers seizing state power. Therefore the CSL must be calling on the workers to have the industry nationalized under *bourgeois* state control. Nationalization, because it centralizes the economy is more efficient, but this greater efficiency can *only* serve the class who *controls* the economy and hence the state. The CSL line of thinking here is not strange for them, since they believe that Russia, China, etc. are workers' states by virtue of their nationalized property and planned economies, even though their economies are controlled and planned not by the workers but by national bourgeoisies.

In point three there is an ambiguity. Why call for a sliding scale of hours and wages and

then set a concrete ratio of hours to wages such as "30 for 40." Any concrete ratio of hours to wages could be established after a sliding scale has been introduced. Of course, even the demand for a sliding scale of wages and hours becomes reformist when not proposed within the context of a full revolutionary program. In fact, even some bureaucrats call for it!

None of these groups offers a revolutionary alternative to Fitzsimmons, Gibbons and the rest of the bourgeois cliquists. Only the program of the Revolutionary Workers Group, the program of revolutionary communism can take the working class to its rightful place at the head of society.

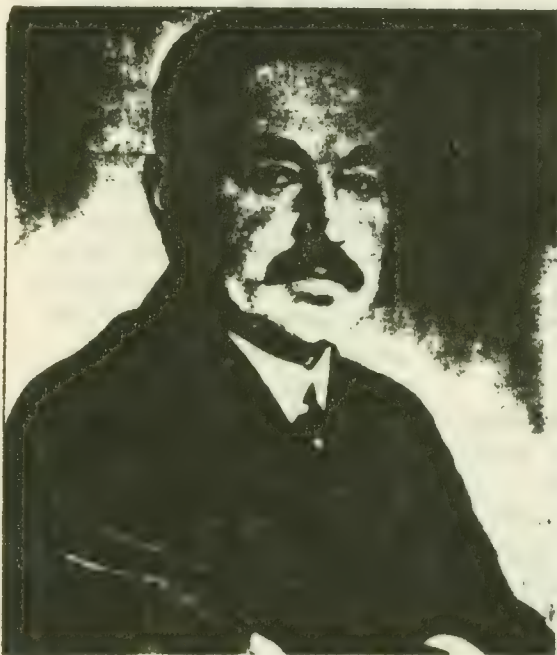
Revolutionary Workers Group Program for the Trade Unions

- * INDEPENDENCE OF THE TRADE UNIONS FROM THE STATE!
- * DEMOCRATIC RANK-AND-FILE CONTROL OF THE TRADE UNIONS!
- * NO SUPPORT TO CAPITALIST GOVERNMENTS!
- * INTERNATIONAL WORKING CLASS SOLIDARITY!
- * A SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES AND HOURS-- JOBS FOR ALL!
- * ORGANIZE THE UNORGANIZED AND THE UNEMPLOYED!
- * ARMED WORKERS' DEFENSE GUARDS!
- * END THE SPECIAL OPPRESSION OF WOMEN!
- * END THE SPECIAL OPPRESSION OF BLACKS, LATINOS AND OTHER MINORITIES!
- * END COMPANY-CONTROLLED SENIORITY SYSTEMS--FULL RIGHTS FOR YOUNG WORKERS!
- * NATIONALIZATION OF ALL INDUSTRY, TRANSPORTATION, ETC. UNDER THE COLLECTIVE CONTROL OF THE ENTIRE WORKING CLASS!
- * BUILD THE INTERNATIONAL PARTY OF REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS (FIFTH INTERNATIONAL)!
- * A WORKERS' REPUBLIC!

Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Russia Part Four

by David Ross

Alexander Shlyapnikov and Alexandra Kollontai led Workers' Opposition which fought capitulation of Bolshevik leadership at Tenth Party Congress in 1921. Opposition failed and capitalist restorationist NEP was introduced.



With this issue we conclude the serialization of the pamphlet Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Russia. This pamphlet outlines the rise and fall of the proletarian dictatorship in Russia.

We can not move on from the NEP without discussing the opposition to it both within and without the Bolshevik Party. The main opposition to the introduction of the NEP came from the Workers' Opposition within the Bolshevik Party led by Alexandra Kollontai and Alexander Shlyapnikov. The Workers' Opposition basically held to the Bolshevik Program of 1919. That is, they demanded that control of the economy be turned over to the trade unions on a local level and on the national level to an All Russian Congress of Producers organized out of the trade unions. They called for the combatting of bureaucracy, and for the maintainence of the best elements of War Communism: A hard line on the peasantry in particular.

In 1921, Alexandra Kollontai summed up the position of the Workers' Opposi-

sition in her pamphlet *The Workers' Opposition*:

The basis of the controversy is namely this: whether we shall realize communism through workers or over their heads, by the hands of soviet officials. And let us, comrades, ponder whether it is possible to attain and build a communist economy by the hands and creative abilities of the scions from the other class, who are imbued with their routine of the past? If we begin to think as Marxians, as men of science, we shall answer categorically and explicitly--no...

...This is the way the Workers' Opposition handles the solution of this difficult problem from which follows the most essential point of their theses. "Organization of control over the social economy is a prerogative

of the All-Russian Congress of Producers, who are united in the trade and industrial unions which elect the central body directing the whole economic life of the republic."

(Theses of the Workers' Opposition).
...The workers' Opposition relies on the creative powers of its own class--the workers....

The cardinal point of controversy that is taking place between the party leaders and the Workers' Opposition is this: In whom will our party place the trust of building up the communist economy--in the Supreme Council of National Economy with all its bureaucratic branches or in the industrial unions?... (1)

The reply of the leadership of the Bolshevik Party to the proposals of the Workers Opposition was contained in the resolution "On the Syndicalist and Anarchist Deviation in Our Party." This resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party, the same Congress which introduced the NEP and banned opposition both within the Soviets and within the party, read in part:

In the past few months a syndicalist and anarchist deviation has been definitely revealed in our Party, and calls for the most resolute measures of ideological struggle and also for purging and restoring the health of the Party....

The most theoretically complete and formulated expression of this deviation (Or: one of the most complete, etc., expressions of this deviation) are the theses and other literary productions of the so-called workers' opposition group. Sufficiently illustrative of this is, for example, the following thesis propounded by this group: "The organization of the administration of the national economy is the function of an All-Russian Producers' Congress organized in industrial trade unions, which elect a central organ for the administration of the entire national economy of the Republic."

The ideas at the bottom of this and numerous analogous statements are radically wrong in theory, and represent a complete rupture with

Marxism and Communism as well as with the practical experience of all semi-proletarian revolutions and of the present proletarian revolution...

The Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party declares that it also regards as radically wrong all attempts on the part of the said group and other persons to defend their fallacious views by referring to point 5 of the economic section of the program of the Russian Communist Party which deals with the role of the trade unions. This point says that "the trade unions must eventually actually concentrate in their hands the entire administration of the whole of national economy as a single economic unit" and that they will "insure in this way indissoluble ties between the central state administration, the national economy and the broad masses of the working people," "drawing" these masses "into the direct work of managing economy. ...

In view of all this, the Congress of the Russian Communist Party, emphatically rejecting the said ideas which express a syndicalist and anarchist deviation, deems it necessary:

Firstly to wage an unswerving and systematic ideological struggle against these ideas; Secondly, the Congress regards the propaganda of these ideas as being incompatible with membership of the Russian Communist Party. (2)

Thus, in their rush to embrace Menshevism, the Bolshevik Party repudiated its own 1919 program labelling it as an anarchist and syndicalist deviation brought on by petty bourgeois pressures, and felt that its propagation was incompatible with membership in the Party of 1921. Gone were the days when the Bolsheviks held that "any cook could be a manager." Those who held that now were petty bourgeois Utopians and a danger to the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Soon after the Tenth Congress the Workers' Opposition was all but eradicated from the Party. Opposition to the NEP over the next few years took the form of isolated strikes and the organization of underground groups such as the "Workers Group" and the "Workers' Truth" group.

The most consistent struggle against the new capitalist state was in our opinion led by the elements organized around the newspaper *Workers' Truth*. These comrades carried on the struggle initiated by the Workers' Opposition: the struggle for revolutionary Marxism and the return to the proletarian struggle. The Bolshevik Party in 1921 abandoned this road and began taking the path down the primrose lane to the realm of bourgeois parties. Just as under Tsarist rule the revolutionary Marxists were hunted down and when found either shot or sent to slave labor camps in Siberia. The watchword of the *Workers Truth* which had been the watchword of the Workers' Opposition before it: "The liberation of the workers can only be the deed of the working class itself," (from Karl Marx) was looked upon not as a sign of devotion to the proletarian cause but as petty bourgeois anarchist wavering, by the Russian Communist Party, and its espousal was grounds for expulsion from the party and persecution outside the Party.

By 1924 all revolutionary opposition had been crushed in the Soviet Union. The last of the *Workers Truth* Comrades had been placed before firing squads or shipped off to Siberia. The history of struggle against Stalin as the emerging leader of the Russian bourgeoisie was left to the left centrists in the Democratic Centralists and Trotskyist Opposition. While the Democratic Centralists did not view the Soviet Union as a workers' state, their analysis and program was confused and tended toward reformism and boring from within the Russian Communist Party. The Trotskyist program on the other hand, while still calling for revolution in the West was thoroughly reformist in relation to the Soviet Union as it continued to labor under the false impression that by virtue of the leading role of the Russian Communist Party, the Soviet state was still a workers' state. Thus, Trotsky waged his struggle primarily against the right wing of the party around Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky who represented the interests of private agrarian capital, most clearly exemplified by Bukharin's infamous slogan

"Kulak, enrich yourself!" The Stalin wing of the Party represented most closely the interests of the nascent state bourgeoisie organized in the managerial and bureaucratic strata of society which by this time had permeated the Communist Party. In an article on the Left (Trotskyist) Opposition by Dave Frankel in *The Militant* we find the following statistics:

As industry extended its operation along the lines of the NEP, its management began to pass back into the hands of former bourgeois managers and specialists who had been replaced by workers in the earlier period of the revolution. An increasing number of these "nepmen" began to enter the Bolshevik Party.

In 1922, 35 percent of the management personnel in major industries were classified as non-workers, and only one in seven of these were party members. A year later, 64 percent were classified as nonworkers, of whom nearly half were party members. (3)

In 1928, Christian Rakovsky, wrote to some friends and said in reference to the effect of the NEP on the Party:

In the mind of Lenin, and in all our minds the task of the party leadership was to protect the party and the working class from the corrupting action of privilege, place and patronage on the part of those in power, from *rapprochement* with the relics of the old nobility and burgherdom, from the corrupting influence of the NEP, from the temptation of bourgeois morals and ideologies....We must say frankly, definitely and loudly that the party apparatus has not fulfilled this task, that it has revealed a complete incapacity for its double role of protector and educator. It has failed. It is bankrupt. (4)

He need only have added: It is bourgeois. For such had the Russian Communist Party become. The meetings of the Central Committee became more and more like cabinet meetings and sessions of parliament in the old capitalist countries. It was here that the representatives of Russian capital argued out who should get the bigger piece of the pie: the private agriculturalists or the state industrialists. The working class was

not looked upon as the rulers of society, but as the producers of the wealth which would be divided amongst the administrators, managers, kulaks, and Nepmen. Referring once again to Frankel's article we find information corroborating that put forward by *Workers' Truth* in 1922: Frankel quotes from E.H. Carr's *The Interregnum*:

Mikoyan told the thirteenth party conference in January 1924 of a specialist who, on being offered a position in a factory in Kuban, had demanded, in addition to various financial bonuses in excess of the maximum salary, and apartment of four rooms fully furnished, with heating, lighting and a bath; a horse and carriage for himself and his family; and permission to keep a cow in the factory grounds. The cooperative which was running the factory agreed to these terms--but too late; for the specialist had in the meanwhile received a more attractive offer in Moscow. Such experiences were said to be quite normal. (5)

Indeed, they were, and what else could one expect in a capitalist country. In 1923 Trotsky wrote the following in *The New Course*:

The social contradictions of the revolution are class contradictions. What are the fundamental classes of our country?--a) the proletariat, b) the peasantry, c) the new bourgeoisie with the layer of bourgeois intellectuals that covers it.

From the standpoint of economic role and political significance, first place belongs to the proletariat organized in the state and to the peasantry which provides the agricultural products which are dominant in our economy. The new bourgeoisie plays principally the role of intermediary between Soviet industry and agriculture as well as between the different parts of Soviet industry and the different spheres of rural economy. But it does not confine itself to being a commercial intermediary; in part, it also assumes the role of organizer of production. (6)

Two questions, Comrade Trotsky: How, pray tell, can the proletariat be "organized in the state" when the industrial workers have nothing to say about

the functioning of the state? And, precisely what kind of state is it in which the bourgeoisie "assumes the role of organizer of production" if not a capitalist state?

We can see from this passage that the Trotskyist Opposition could offer no alternative for the Russian working class. It analyzed a state in which the bourgeoisie organized production and in which the proletariat had no democratic control over anything as a workers' state! If this was a workers' state, what was capitalism, was no doubt running through the minds of the Russian workers. And rightly so, for Trotsky and his followers totally capitulated to the ideology of the new Russian ruling class, an ideology that said that the workers ruled when they didn't and that the whole question of workers' state vs. capitalist state was tied up in planned economy, nationalized industry, and state monopoly of foreign trade. Trotsky's fundamental opposition in the early twenties was that of a reformist demanding more attention for the industrial sector of the economy. Thus, it should come as no surprise to anyone that Stalin eventually adopted Trotsky's economic program lock, stock, and barrel. It should be recalled that the American Democratic Party adopted the program of the reformist Populist Party, thus cutting the ground out from under them also.

During the early and mid-twenties Russian industry began to develop, and along with it grew the power of the state bourgeoisie, whose major political representative was Stalin. The promulgation of "socialism in one country" was not just a revision of Marxism, but the basis for the state capitalist ideology. This ideology equates state property with socialism, and in a sense is similar to the ideology palmed off by Western liberals and conservatives alike that countries like Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and even England are socialist. The Stalinists developed a "new" proletarian culture to go with their "socialist" state. This culture, however, was nothing more than the worst of bourgeois culture. Constantly day after day, hour after hour the Russian workers were pelted with the propaganda that they lived in a country that was

building socialism, a country full of socialist realism in art, a country which stood out as the socialist fatherland. Nothing would have been further from the truth. All control and power was in the hands of the state capitalist bureaucracy and the kulaks and Nepmen. The workers had no say, and were exploited viciously to raise production for the ruling class, all in the name of building socialism. The Trotskyists, however, offered little alternative. They, too, urged the workers to sacrifice and produce for the "socialist fatherland." They, however, pointed out that the "socialist fatherland" was deformed and degenerated. However, even if the workers did not know it, even if the workers reaped no benefits from it, even if the workers were exploited and oppressed, it was still their state. Instead of waging a struggle within the working class to overthrow the exploiters and raise the banner of a second October, the Trotskyist Opposition chose to wrangle with the capitalists about how best to develop "their" (meaning the nation's) industry.

At about 1923 Soviet industry began to lag behind agriculture even though it still continued to develop. Throughout the period from 1923 to 1928 the Trotskyists refrained from organizing the proletariat in a revolutionary party and instead argued with Stalin and Bukharin about industrialization. While the Russian proletariat lay prostrated and exploited before the kulak and the state administrator, the Trotskyists debated with the rulers on how best to carry out this exploitation.

Finally in 1928 the state bourgeoisie finally feeling strong enough and realizing that unless drastic measures were taken that it would lose its privileged position in society to the kulaks and the free traders, decided to take the advice of the Trotskyist Opposition. They instituted a virtual civil war against the kulaks which represented a political revolution in which the state capitalist sector of the bourgeoisie seized complete power from the kulaks and the free traders and instituted a planned economy. An economy, however, that was not planned

in the interests of the workers but in the interests of the ruling capitalist stratum, the top managers and administrators. Thus, the Left Opposition played the role of Harold Wilson and the British Labour Party who clamor for wage controls, only to see them introduced later by the Tories, but in a more extreme manner than they had envisioned.

Thus by 1929 the Soviet bureaucracy had established itself as the sole ruling class in Russia. The Soviet economy, which will be discussed in another document, was essentially capitalist: production was for profit accumulated in the means of production for the benefit of a small sector of society, not society as a whole. The absurdity of calling the Soviet Union a workers' state can be seen if we quote once again from Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*:

In its intermediary and regulating function, its concern to maintain social ranks, and its exploitation of the state apparatus for personal goals, the Soviet bureaucracy is similar to every other bureaucracy, especially the fascist. But it is also in a vast way different. In no other regime has a bureaucracy achieved such a degree of independence from the dominating class. In bourgeois society, the bureaucracy represents the interests of a possessing and educated class, which has at its disposal innumerable means of everyday control over its administration of affairs. The Soviet bureaucracy has risen above a class which is hardly emerging from destitution and darkness, and has no tradition of domination or command. Whereas the fascists, when they find themselves in power, are united with the bourgeoisie by bonds of common interest, friendship, marriage, etc., the Soviet bureaucracy takes on bourgeois customs without having beside it a national bourgeoisie. In this sense we cannot deny that it is something more than a bureaucracy. It is in the full sense of the word the sole privileged and commanding stratum in the Soviet society. (?)

While Trotsky is forced to admit that the Soviet bureaucracy stands above the

proletariat and is the sole commanding stratum in Soviet society, he still can not bring himself to admit that it is a ruling class. In the next paragraph he points out that the means of production are owned by the state and that the state is owned by the bureaucracy. This he says:

1. creates a new and hitherto unknown relation between the bureaucracy and the riches of the nation.

(8)

Trotsky can not get off so easily in playing the neophyte. The relationship of the bureaucracy to the means of production is not new, and it is not unknown. It is the relationship of a capitalist class to the means of production. The relationship of a class which owns and operates the means of production in its own interests and exploits the workers who produce the wealth by paying them only a small fraction of the value that they produce and expropriating the rest and accumulating the bulk of it in the means of production. We will deal more thoroughly with this question in *The Economy of State Capitalism*.

In conclusion we wish to answer a question posed by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

Why, from 1917 to 1921, when the old ruling classes were still fighting with weapons in their hands, when they were actively supported by the imperialists of the whole world, when the kulaks' arms were sabotaging the army and food supplies of the country,--why was it possible to dispute openly and fearlessly in the party about the most critical questions of policy? Why now, after the cessation of intervention, after the shattering of the exploiting classes after the indubitable successes of industrialization, after the collectivization of the overwhelming majority of the peasants, is it impossible to permit the slightest word of criticism of the unremovable leaders? Why is it that any Bolshevik who should demand the calling of the congress of the party in accordance with its constitution would be immediately expelled, any citizen who expressed out loud a doubt of the infallibility of Stalin would be

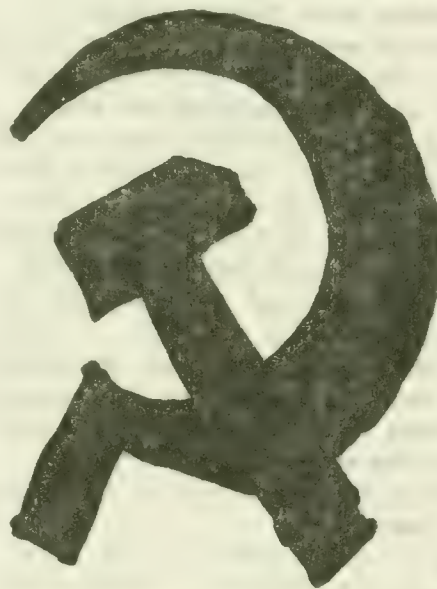
tried and convicted almost as though a participant in a terrorist plot? Whence this terrible, monstrous and unbearable intensity of repression and of the police apparatus? (9)

The answer, Comrade Trotsky, is simple: from 1917 to 1921, Russia was a country living under the dictatorship of the proletariat. After that time it lived under the dictatorship of capital. The events outlined are nothing more nor less than the expression of the unbridled tyranny of capitalist dictatorship.

And finally a question for Comrade Trotsky, or more precisely for the Comrades Trotskyists: Why is it that those who proclaimed the Bolshevik program of trade union control of the economy in 1919 were good Bolsheviks, while those who proclaimed the same program in 1921 were petty bourgeois anarcho-syndicalists?

NOTES

- (1) Daniels, *A Documentary History of Communism*, Vol. 1, pp. 200-201, emphasis in original
- (2) *Ibid.*, pp. 209-211
- (3) *The Militant*, Dec. 8, 1972, p. 16
- (4) Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 101, emphasis in original
- (5) *The Militant*, op. cit., p. 16
- (6) Trotsky, *The New Course*, p. 39
- (7) Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 248-249
- (8) *Ibid.*, p. 249
- (9) *Ibid.*, p. 108



Archives of the Revolution

The Roots of the Part Two Workers' Opposition

by Alexandra Kollontai

Archives of the Revolution is a regular feature of Workers' Truth. Each month we reprint for the benefit of our readers part or all of a particular speech, article or document from the vast and rich heritage of the revolutionary Marxist movement. In this issue we continue the serialization of The Roots of the Workers' Opposition by Alexandra Kollontai. This is the first part of the 1921 pamphlet by Kollontai outlining the program of the Workers' Opposition, who we feel were the continuators of Marxism and Bolshevism in the Russian Communist Party after the centrist capitulation of Lenin and Trotsky. Kollontai's pamphlet was presented to the Tenth Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March, 1921. Instead of adopting this program which was essentially a restatement of the tenets espoused in the 1919 Bolshevik Party Program, the capitalist restorationist New Economic Policy of Lenin and Trotsky. Because of the revolutionary fight waged by the Workers' Opposition for the principles of Bolshevism against the Party leadership which was turning to Menshevism, factions were banned in the Bolshevik Party and propagation of the program of the Workers' Opposition (within the Party) was declared to be incompatible with Party membership.

The more Soviet Russia finds itself in need of specialists in the sphere of technique and management of production, the stronger becomes the influence of these elements, foreign to the working class, on the development of our economy. Having been thrown aside during the first period of the revolution, and being compelled to take up an attitude of watchful waiting or sometimes even open hostility towards the Soviet authorities, particularly during the most trying months (the historical sabotage by the intellectuals), this social group of brains in capitalist production, of servile, hired, wellpaid servants of capital, acquire more and more influence and importance in politics with every day that passes.

Do we need names? Every fellow worker, carefully watching our foreign and domestic policy, recalls more than one such name.

As long as the center of our life remained at the military fronts, the influence of these gentlemen directing our Soviet policy, particularly in the sphere of industrial reconstruction, was comparatively negligible.

Specialists, the remnants of the

past, by all their nature closely, unalterably bound to the bourgeois system that we aim to destroy, gradually begin to penetrate into our Red Army, introducing there their atmosphere of the past (blind subordination, servile obedience, distinction, ranks, and the arbitrary will of superiors in place of class discipline, etc.). But their influence did not extend to the general political activity of the Soviet Republic.

The proletariat did not question their superior skill to direct military affairs, fully realizing through their healthy class instinct that in military matters the working class as a class cannot express a new world, is powerless to introduce substantial changes into the military system--to reconstruct its foundation on a new class basis. Professional militarism--an inheritance of past ages--militarism and wars will have no place in Communist society. The struggle will go on along other channels, will take quite different forms inconceivable to our imagination. Militarism lives through its last days, through the transitory epoch of dictatorship, and therefore it is only natural

that the workers, as a class, could not introduce into the forms and systems anything new and conducive to the future development of society. Even in the Red Army, however, there were innovating touches of the working class. But the nature of militarism remained the same, and the direction of military affairs by the former officers and generals of the old army did not draw the Soviet policy in military matters away to the opposite side sufficiently for the workers to feel any harm to themselves or to their class interests.

In the sphere of national economy it is quite different, however. Production, its organization--this is the essence of Communism. To debar the workers from the organization of industry, to deprive them, that is, their individual organizations, of the opportunity to develop their powers in creating new forms of production in industry through their unions, to deny these expressions of the class organization of the proletariat, while placing full reliance on the "skill" of specialists trained and taught to carry on production under a quite different system of production--is to jump off the rails of scientific Marxist thought. That is, however, just the thing that is being done by the leaders of our Party at present.

Taking into consideration the utter collapse of our industries while still clinging to the capitalist mode of production (payment for labor in money, variation in wages received according to the work done) our Party leaders, in a fit of distrust in the creative abilities of workers' collectives, are seeking salvation from the industrial chaos. Where? In the hands of scions of the bourgeois-capitalist past. In businessmen and technicians, whose creative abilities in the sphere of industry are subject to the routine, habits and methods of the capitalist system of production and economy. They are the ones who introduce the ridiculously naive belief that it is possible to bring about Communism by bureaucratic means. They "decree" where it is now necessary to create and carry on research.

The more the military front recedes before the economic front, the keener becomes our crying need, the more pronounced the influence of that group which is not only inherently foreign to Communism, but absolutely unable to develop the right qualities for introducing new forms of organizing the work, of new motives for increasing production, of *new approaches to production and distribution*. All these technicians, practical men, men of business experience, who just now appear on the surface of Soviet life bring pressure to bear upon the leaders of our Party through and within the Soviet institutions by exerting their influence on economic policy.

The Party, therefore, finds itself in a difficult and embarrassing situation regarding the control over the Soviet state. It is forced to lend an ear and to adapt itself to three economically hostile groups of the population, each different in social structure. The workers demand a clear-cut, uncompromising policy, a rapid, forced advance towards Communism; the peasantry, with its petty-bourgeois proclivities and sympathies, demands different kinds of "freedom," including the freedom of trade and non-interference in their affairs. The latter are joined in this demand by the burgher class in the form of "agents" of Soviet officials, commissaries in the army, etc., who have already adapted themselves to the Soviet regime, and sway our policy toward petty-bourgeois lines.

As far as the center is concerned, the influence of these petty-bourgeois elements is negligible. But in the provinces and in local Soviet activity, their influence is a great and harmful one. Finally, there is still another group of men, consisting of the former managers and directors of the capitalist industries. These are not the magnates of capital, like Riabushinsky or Publikov, whom the Soviet Republic got rid of during the first phase of the revolution, but they are the most talented servants of the capitalist system of production, the "brains and genius" of Capitalism, its true creators and sponsors. Heartily approving the centralist tendencies of the Soviet

government in the sphere of economics, well realizing all the benefits of trustification and regulation of production (this, by the way, is being carried on by capital in all advanced industrial countries), they are striving for just one thing--they want this regulation to be carried on, not through the labor organizations (the industrial unions), but by themselves --acting now under the guise of Soviet economic institutions--the central industrial committees, industrial centers of the Supreme Council of National Economy, where they are already firmly rooted.

The influence of these gentlemen on the "sober" State policy of our leaders is great, considerably greater than is desirable. This influence is reflected in the policy which defends and cultivates bureaucratism (with no attempts to change it entirely, but just to improve it). The policy is particularly obvious in the sphere of our foreign trade with the capitalist states, which is just beginning to spring up: *these commercial relations are carried on over the heads of the Russian as well as the foreign organized workers.* It finds its expression, also, in a whole series of measures restricting the self-activity of the masses and giving the initiative to the scions of the capitalist world.

Among all these various groups of the population, our Party, by trying to find a middle ground, is compelled to steer a course which does not jeopardize the unity of the State interests. The clear-cut policy of our Party, in the process of identifying itself with Soviet State institutions, is being gradually transformed into an upper-class policy, which in essence is nothing else but an adaptation of our directing centers to the heterogeneous and irreconcilable interests of a socially different, mixed, population. This adaptation leads to inevitable vacillation, fluctuations, deviations and mistakes. It is only necessary to recall the zig-zag like road of our policy toward the peasantry, which from "banking on the poor peasant," brought us to placing reliance on "the industrious peasant-owner."

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er." Let us admit that this policy is proof of the political soberness and "Statecraft wisdom" of our directing centers. But the future historian, analyzing without bias the stages of our domination, will find and point out that in this is evident "a dangerous digression" from the class line toward "adaptation" and a course full of harmful possibilities or results.

Let us again take the question of foreign trade. There exists in our policy an obvious duplicity. This is attested by the constant, unending friction between the Commissariat of Foreign Trade and the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs. This friction is not of administrative nature alone. Its cause lies deeper. And if the secret work of the directing centers were exposed to the view of rank and file elements, who knows what the controversy dividing the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs and the trade representatives abroad might lead to?

This seemingly administrative friction is essentially a serious, deep, social friction, concealed from the rank and file, and makes it absolutely necessary for Soviet politics to adapt to the three heterogeneous social groups of the population (workers, peasants and representatives of the former bourgeoisie). This constitutes *another cause bringing a crisis into our Party.* And we cannot but pay attention to this cause. It is too characteristic, too pregnant with possibilities. It is, therefore, the duty of our Party, on behalf of Party unity and future activity, to ponder over this cause and to learn the necessary lessons from the wide-spread dissatisfaction generated by it in the rank and file.

As long as the working class, during the first period of the revolution, felt itself to be the only bearer of Communism, there was perfect unanimity in the Party. In the days immediately following the October revolution, none could even think of "ups" as something different from "downs," for in those days the advanced workers were busily engaged in realizing point after point in our class-Communist program. The peasant who received the land did not at the time assert himself as a part of

and a full fledged citizen of the Soviet Republic. Intellectuals, specialists, men of affairs--the entire petty-bourgeois class and pseudo-specialists at present climbing up the Soviet ladder, rung by rung, under the guise of "specialists," stepped aside, watching and waiting but meanwhile giving freedom to the advanced working masses to develop their creative abilities.

At present, however, it is just the other way. The worker feels, sees, and realizes at every step that specialists and (what is worse) untrained illiterate pseudo-specialists, and unpractical men, throw out the worker and fill up all the high administrative posts of our industrial and economic institutions. And the Party, instead of putting the brakes on this tendency from the elements which are altogether foreign to the working class and Communism, encourages it. The Party seeks salvation from the industrial chaos, not in the workers but in these very elements. Not in the workers, not in their union organizations does the Party repose its trust, but in these elements. The working masses feel it and instead of unanimity and unity in the Party, there appears a break. The masses are not blind. Whatever words the most popular leaders might use in order to conceal their deviation from a clear-cut class policy, whatever the compromises made with the peasants and world Capitalism, and whatever the trust that the leaders place in the disciples of the capitalist system of production, the working masses feel where the digression begins.

The workers may cherish an ardent affection and love for such personalities as Lenin. They may be fascinated by the incomparable flowery eloquence of Trotsky and his organizing abilities. They may revere a number of other leaders--as leaders. But when the masses feel that they and their class are not trusted, it is quite natural that they say: "No, halt! We refuse to follow you blindly. Let us examine the situation. Your policy of picking out the middle ground between three socially opposed groups is a wise one indeed, but it smacks of the well-trying

and familiar adaptation and opportunism. Today we may gain something with the help of your sober policy, but let us beware lest we find ourselves on a wrong road that, through zigzags and turns, will lead us from the future to the debris of the past."

Distrust of the workers by the leaders is steadily growing. The more sober these leaders get, the more clever statesmen they become with their policy of sliding over the blade of a sharp knife between Communism and compromise with the bourgeois past, the deeper becomes the abyss between the "ups" and the "downs," the less understanding there is, and the more painful and inevitable becomes the crisis within the Party itself.

The third reason enhancing the crisis in the Party is that, in fact, during these three years of the revolution, the economic situation of the working class, of those who work in factories and mills, has not only not been improved, but has become more unbearable. This nobody dares to deny. The suppressed and widely-spread dissatisfaction among workers (*workers*, mind you) has a real justification.

To be continued

from the Bolshevik Program of 1919

The organised apparatus of social production must primarily depend upon the trade unions. These unions must to an increasing extent free themselves from craft bonds. They must be transformed into huge productive unities, enrolling the majority of the workers, and in due time all the workers, in the respective branches of production.

We will soon be publishing in its entirety Kollontai's pamphlet The Workers' Opposition along with an appendix: Theses of the Workers' Opposition on the trade union question in revolutionary Russia.

...Spain

continued from page 7

stated a few paragraphs earlier:

We are not neutral. We will let the ship with the munitions for the Negrin government pass. We have no illusions: from these bullets, only nine of every ten would go against the fascists, at least one against our comrades. But out of those marked for Franco, ten out of every ten would go to our comrades (the fascists don't shoot at the loyalists?--D.R.). We are not neutral. We do not let the ship with the munitions for Franco pass. Of course, if an armed insurrection began in Spain, we would try to direct

the ships with munitions into the hands of the rebellious workers. But when we are not that strong, we choose the lesser evil,

(*Ibid.*, p. 285)

There you have it in a nutshell: centrism, pure and simple. While the Trotskyist in the Spanish parliament is voting against war appropriations, Trotskyists on the docks and on ships are making sure that the munitions which the Spanish Trotskyist has just voted against, get to the Spanish bourgeoisie so that at least one of every ten bullets can be used against Spanish Trotskyists (not to mention non-Trotskyists

workers). So much for Trotskyist transitional logic!

Trotsky's "lesser evil" military strategy is a complete rejection of Marxism. We do not deny that the blood of the

Spanish working class on the hands of the Social-Democrats, Stalinist POUMists and Anarchist. However, if the hands the Trotskyists are relatively free from Spanish proletarian blood, it only, because of their ability to influence a significant section of the Spanish working class. As has generally been case, the Trotskyists were "saved" from perpetrating a mass betrayal only by their isolation from the working class.

Phase Four

More of the Same

President Nixon (safe in a heavily guarded Bethesda Naval Hospital bed) has announced his new control plan for inflation dubbed Phase Four. Surprise! Nothing has changed. Phase Four is supposed to be a get tough policy on prices. This means that probably half a dozen more bureaucrats will be hired to occasionally glance at what prices are doing. In the meantime the wage controls will stay the same as in Phase Three where the capitalists and their loyal lapdogs

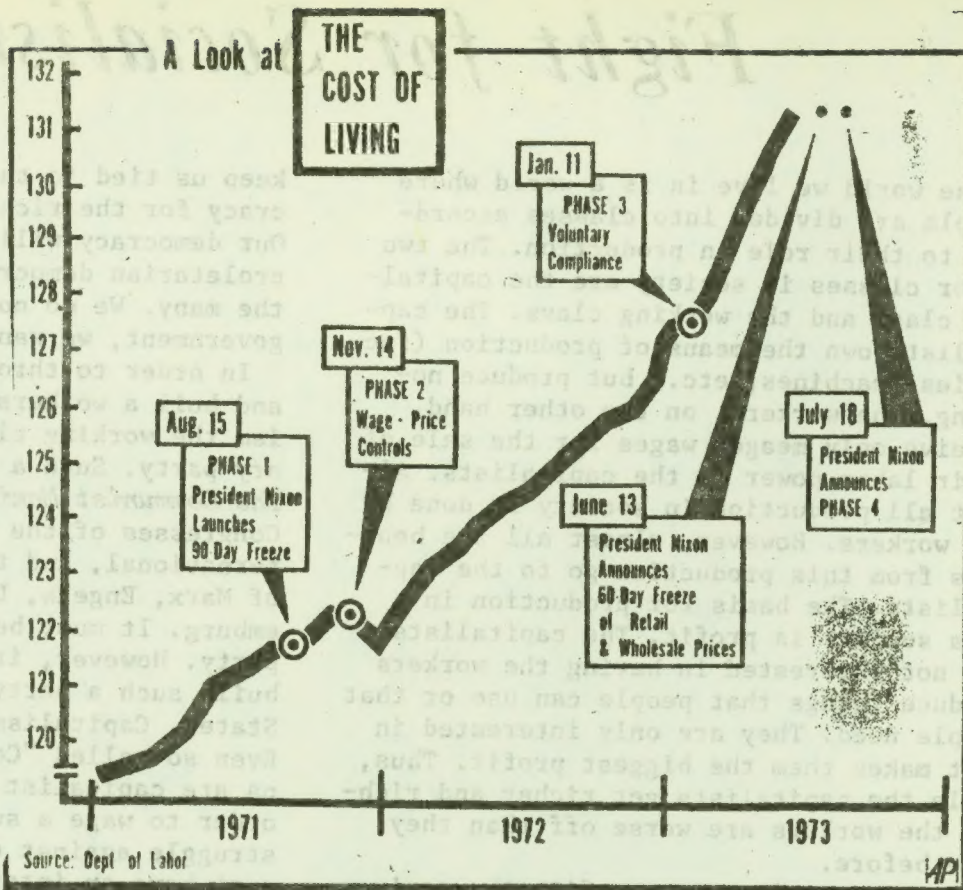
the trade union bureaucracy "voluntarily" hold down the wages of the working class.

For all of Nixon's talk about fighting inflation, his New Economic Policy has done nothing of the sort. In fact about the only thing which is keeping up with the astronomically soaring cost of living is the profit percentages of the major corporations and Ron Blomberg's batting average (and even that is beginning to pale in comparison with the workers' cost of living and the capitalists profitabil-

ity). Actually the capitalist state has no intentions of holding down prices. Even the so-called freeze on prices recently initiated by Nixon (where prices were frozen at their highest peak) will be called off early in most industries including food which besides rent absorbs the bulk of the working class's take-home pay! While the capitalists continue to raise food and gasoline prices they will continue to cry that it is not their fault. They

will blame Japan, Russia, the Arabs, the Jews, (most often) the workers who are trying to get enough of a wage increase to eat half as poorly as they were at this time last year, (they may even start blaming Ron Blomberg's batting average, who knows?). But it is not the workers who are to blame for inflation. The blame lies squarely on the doorstep of the capitalists and their system. In fact, overproduction, inflation and crisis are bred into the capitalist system, particularly during its stage of imperialist decay.

While inflation soars the much heralded consumer movement has completely collapsed flat on its face. Going down with it slowly but surely is the middle class reformist Socialist Workers Party. While the SWP and the middle class professional consumer advocates were demanding that the capitalist class "End Inflation Now!" the capitalist system and (oddly enough) inflation kept right on running. They will continue to run, spewing forth pollution, death and destruction until the working class organized under the leadership of an International Party of Revolutionary Workers asserts itself and *destroys the capitalist system* replacing it with the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism.



Inflation's toll. Figures for freeze period are not yet available.

think
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 think
AHEAD
 think
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If this Exchange National Bank ad from *U.S. NEWS & World Report* doesn't convince you of Israel's capitalist nature, then start following our serialization of *Revolutionary Perspectives in the Middle East* beginning with our August issue.

Fight for Socialism!

The world we live in is a world where people are divided into classes according to their role in production. The two major classes in society are the capitalist class and the working class. The capitalists own the means of production (factories, machines, etc.) but produce nothing. The workers, on the other hand, receive only meager wages for the sale of their labor power to the capitalists. Almost all production in society is done by the workers. However, almost all the benefits from this production go to the capitalists. The basis for production in this society is profit. The capitalists are not interested in having the workers produce things that people can use or that people need. They are only interested in what makes them the biggest profit. Thus, while the capitalists get richer and richer, the workers are worse off than they are before.

In order to increase profits the capitalists resort to all sorts of techniques which most of us are familiar with: speeding up, wage cuts, unemployment, labor-saving machinery. While, for instance, labor-saving machinery would be progressive in a society run by the workers, it does nothing for them under capitalism. It is just another attack on the workers.

Another feature of capitalist society is war. Every day there is a war going on somewhere in the world. This is due to the necessity of the capitalists to wage war in order to get ahead of capitalists in other countries. The working class has no interests in supporting these wars. What the workers want is peace. However, there can be no peace until the capitalists have been removed from power and this society replaced with one run by the workers in the interests of the toiling masses.

To do this, it is not enough to elect people to Congress or as President. The government is nothing more than the executive committee of the ruling class. It is the owners of the big corporations who have the final say as to what goes on. It is necessary to organize our own workers' councils. These councils will be the class rule of the workers after the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. When capitalism goes Congress will go with it. All the democracy surrounding the Congress is just a sham to

keep us tied to this system. It is democracy for the rich, for the capitalists. Our democracy will be real democracy, proletarian democracy, the democracy of the many. We do not simply want a workers' government, we want a workers' republic.

In order to throw out the capitalists and build a workers' republic and socialism the working class needs a revolutionary party. Such a party must be based on *The Communist Manifesto*, the first two Congresses of the Communist (Third) International, and the revolutionary work of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg. It must be a democratic-centralist party. However, it is not enough to build such a party here in the United States. Capitalism is a world system. Even so-called "Communist" Russia and China are capitalist (state capitalist). In order to wage a successful worldwide struggle against capitalism the workers must have an international party. It is toward the construction of the International Party of Revolutionary Workers (Fourth International) that the Revolutionary Workers Group and *Workers' Truth* are dedicated.

In 1917 the Russian workers seized power under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and Lenin. However, the revolution was isolated and the Russian workers exhausted from the hard struggle in a backward country lost power when the Bolsheviks lost faith in the world proletariat in 1921. The four years of the revolutionary dictatorship still remain, however, as a beacon for workers throughout the world.

Under capitalism the workers are nothing more than menials. We deserve a better life. We deserve socialism. However, it will not be handed to us on a platter. We must fight for it. For if we do not fight for socialism we will be handed barbarism. Socialism or barbarism?
Fight for Socialism!

